

Thank you for all the funding you provide to child welfare. It helps avoid outcomes like the one that recently occurred in Hillsdale County. 3 year old Beautiful, Skyla Villaneuva, died June 10, 2011 at the Hillsdale Community Health Center of "abusive head trauma" the boyfriend of her mother (James David Campbell) pled guilty on Sept 12 to "torture and other felonies in connection with Beautiful's death and faces sentencing Oct 24. (See page one Jackson Citizen Patriot.) Thank you for the funding that enables public and private child welfare agencies to work together to **prevent** such horrid abuses to children and to help the children who survive such abuse and neglect to **heal** and become productive members of society.

My name is DeLois T. Leapheart and by God's grace, I am the founder of a child welfare agency located in Midland, MI. We have served helped more than 100 children get adopted and helped more than 100 families get licensed. We would not have been able to help children as quickly, had the legislation preventing retired workers from being hired by private agencies been in place in 2004, when we first obtained our license. I was just an attorney who had been a corporate attorney for a decade and a private attorney who provided a variety of legal services including adoption, when I discover the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange, which provides a variety of services to the 300+ children whose parental rights are terminated and desire to be adopted. With a heart to help and little else, I set out to form an agency that could help improve the lives of children waiting to be adopted. My educational background does not allow me to provide any of our direct care services.

Since financial resources were not in abundance, one of the ways our agency was able to help children achieve permanency through adoption was by contracting with a retired DHS adoption worker. She has provided assistance with:

- --licensing foster homes;
- --monitoring children in foster care
- --adoptions

I'm here to ask you to support this bill for three reasons: 1) Better Outcomes for Children; 2) Cost Neutral; 3) Helps Comply with Mandated Consent Decree.

1) Better Outcomes for Children;

It helps children heal from the trauma of abuse and neglect sooner by providing private agencies access to a pool of readily available, recently retired, experienced DHS staff from DHS, who wish to continue to serve children on a part-time basis.

2) Cost Neutral, Cost Savings;

State pays private agency the same \$\$ whether I hire a recent graduate or an experienced worker. Payments from state are based on outcomes completed, NOT whether the employee who completed the service was formerly employed by the State of Michigan. The State will save training dollars in these circumstances.

3) Helps Comply with Mandated Consent Decree.

Private agencies can more quickly and effectively increase their level of compliance with the Consent Decree if they are not prohibited from employing qualified experience persons who were formerly employed with DHS.